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PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN PUKAPUKAN CHILDREN

By ERNEST AND PEARL BEAGLEHOLE

I

121 ONE OF THE MOST memorable aspects of Edward Sapir's genius was his ability to think in terms of problems rather than within the academic limits of orthodoxly defined subjects. Ethnology, linguistics, and psychology thereby became cross-fertilized. Schools and methods became of secondary importance, or rather, were evaluated not in terms of narrow fields of investigation, but in the light of the help they promised for the solution of broadly conceived significant scientific problems. It was typical of Sapir, therefore, that he should have sensed in the problem of personality formation one of those major scientific orientations that direct the research and thinking of a generation or more of scientists. It was also typical of him that he should realize that no continuing research problem is worth the candle unless it breaks down into a series of hypotheses that stimulate and direct research not so much on several minor fronts but on one major front that draws to itself the support of sometimes independently conceived disciplines. The major problem for Sapir was the impact of cultures on personality. One of the linking hypotheses was his conception of culture, not as "something given but something gradually and gropingly discovered." The key to the way in which the individual personality discovers culture obviously lies in the field of child development. Lesser minds, having arrived at this point, might have washed hands and tossed the problem across to a field of study called "child psychology." Not so Sapir. He studied children himself (who of his students does not recall those memorable seminar discussions when the heart and mind of a child were examined with consummate skill). And as a second best, he suggested to some at least of his students that primitive children were quite as worthy of study as material culture or kinship systems. Again, however, the emphasis was always on problems rather than mere description of what children say or do or think.

It was directly under the stimulus, therefor, of Sapir's teaching that one of us undertook before a Polynesian field trip to draw up a series of notes and queries designed to serve as a guide to the study of the factors involved in the socialization of the primitive child.[1] By socialization was meant generally all those factors, influences, and processes, formalized or implicit, which the culture of the group acting through parents, elders, or other children brings to bear upon the neonate and continues through maturation to adolescence in order gradually to mould the raw stuff of human nature into conformity with group patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior. It was felt that material collected to answer such queries would throw some light on the influence of cultural factors in personality development and that further, viewing such material against the background of documented life histories, evidence might

[1] Paul Boyer, Some Notes and Queries for the Study of Personality Development in Primitive Societies (Ms., 1934).

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121 present itself regarding the factors bearing upon the development of personality differences.

The following material in no sense represents the fulfilment of a somewhat ambitious project. Owing to various exigencies of fieldwork[2] over which we had no control it was neither possible to study Pukapukan children with the detail they deserved, nor solve all the problems and hypotheses which we took with us into the field. Enough material was collected, however, to prove without doubt the fruitfulness of this aspect of Sapir's approach to the problems of personality. Some of this material is summarized here. If it raises more problems than it suggests answers to, this again is but tribute to Sapir's scientific acumen. After all, no new scientific approach is worth much unless it, at one and the same time, both suggests questions that should be asked and opens up wide fields of investigation. The sterile problem is the one that can most easily be answered.

II

842 The process of growing up in Pukapuka, as viewed from the vantage point of custom and
573 institution, is for the average child an uneventful and straight-forward business. Children
848 are eagerly desired by almost all parents. Male children are necessary to establish the continuity of descent and lineage. Both male and female children provide a form of old age insurance. Both, too, help to increase the flow of food into the family that results from regularly recurring village food divisions. Both sexes are also desired because the Pukapukan has real love and affection for children in themselves. The child of an unmarried mother is at no particular disadvantage. His maternal grandparents welcome the infant, giving him social status in the community. When his mother marries, as she surely will after thus establishing irrefutable proof of her child-bearing abilities, her child is almost always adopted by her husband and thus given paternal lineage status.

853 The new-born child is taken to the sea and washed, then oiled and wrapped in soft pan-
846 danus mats. For two or more days until the mother's milk comes the child is fed on coconut cream whenever it cries. For the first few days of life also the infant is cradled in the arms of female relations most of the day and night. It is given the breast whenever it cries. The mother sits while nursing, the child cuddled in her arms. Feeding is a leisurely procedure. The child is not hurried in any way but is allowed to satisfy itself fully and doze off to sleep still at the breast. When the infant is older it is held upright to nurse, its feet resting on the mother's lap. Older infants still adopt any attitude in feeding from the breast that suits them. Soft coconut flesh is introduced into the infant's diet at an early age, never however as a substitute for the leisurely and warm intimacy of breast feeding. The infant, though never left alone whether sleeping or awake, is rarely carried about. The mother remains inactive
854 for some weeks after delivery. Thereafter when she participates more fully in gardening and
857 domestic duties she leaves her child within the house in the care of an older child or female relative. The infant is carried about only when the guardian is a young girl who cannot resist

[2] Fieldwork was carried out on the Polynesian atoll of Pukapuka, one of the northern Cook group, for seven and a half months. The culture has been described in some detail in Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, *Ethnology of Pukapuka* (Bulletin, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, No. 150, 1938).

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854 the temptation of watching a group of her companions playing games on the beach. Then
[857] she carries the infant along with her, comforted gently in her arms.

As the infant grows older, it is gradually stripped of its baby coverings and lies naked on its mat. It then spends most of its time lying, sitting, and wriggling round beside the mother while she sits at her cooking or mat plaiting or else asleep within the cool house a few feet away. At this early age the child is good humoredly cleaned whenever it soils itself. Any older person in the household, male or female, who happens to be near the child at the time
853 performs this task. Besides being fed whenever it shows signs of hunger, the child is always
868 given the breast to comfort it and pacify it whenever it appears frightened or in pain. The child is comforted and petted in this way whenever it falls during the process of learning to walk.

592 The household into which the child is born consists on an average of between six and seven persons. The basis of this group generally consists of the biological family of mother, father, and one or more children. The most common additional member is generally an adult son's wife. Thereafter adopted children and relatives of almost every possible degree of relationship help to add to the group's number.

The composition of this household remains relatively stable throughout the child's life. Such breaks in the social fabric as death, marriage, divorce, birth, adoption, weaning cause a slight rearrangement of numbers, rarely of fundamental composition. Children practically
[597] never change their residence or feeding house among a larger kindred group according to personal whim. It may be noted from this that the Pukapukan child is brought up in a definite
854 type of household group; its contacts while young within the household are rather narrowly
543 defined in range. The child is mainly cared for by its mother. The father has no specific duties to perform. He is sympathetic and lavish in his affection for his child, caring for it, however, only when it is necessary or convenient. During much of its waking life the infant is fondled and carried by any male or female relatives or friends who happen to be visiting or working at the parents' house. Authority over the infant is largely focussed in the mother. Love, dependence, and affection on the other hand tend to diffuse themselves among many members of or visitors to the household. This fact and those patterns relating to infancy already given may well be emphasized because they do suggest that up to the time of weaning the infant is enabled to develop emotional attitudes that give the utmost possible psychological security. And this security stands the infant in good stead not only throughout the gradual process of building up its early habit patterns, but also at the time of weaning. Pukapukan infancy up to the time of weaning, that is, seems to be marked by a very minimum of frustration in regard to basic physiological and emotional needs.[9]

[9] In Pukapuka, we also strongly suspect, but cannot document, the fact that the lineage (here a paternal lineage) extends and deepens the sense of belongingness and safety secured first by the infant from a mother's cuddling. Besides its many sociological functions, therefore, the Pukapukan lineage tends to serve as a psychological device in this culture whereby a security and place of belonging are obtained by the child which transcends the immediate routines and experiences of the family-household. Compare Beaglehole, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–33; James S. Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern* (New York, 1937), pp. 252–53.

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862 The degree to which the process of weaning is traumatic depends somewhat on the type of weaning carried out. There are two methods of weaning in Pukapuka. The first is used if the mother becomes ill, or if the milk fails, or if she becomes pregnant again. In such case, the child is suddenly and immediately removed from its mother's presence and care and placed entirely in the care of a feeding parent, usually the father's sister or the mother's mother. The breaking off is complete and absolute. The feeding parent carries the child about day and night, trying to pacify it and feeding it coconut water, grated coconut, and grated taro. For some children this weaning may take a week to complete. For children more dependent upon their mothers, weaning may take two or more weeks. The second method of weaning is more gradual. The infant is taken to feeding parents in another village and left with them for a whole day at a time. The feeding parents fondle the child, feed it solid foods, and try to keep it happy and pacified. This occurs once or twice a week over a period of about two months, the mother meanwhile trying to accustom the child to solid foods, feeding him coconut and taro before giving the breast. By the end of these months, the child is walking [866] fairly well. He is encouraged to identify himself with the activities of his siblings, to play away from his mother as much as possible. More and more the mother refuses to give the breast at the child's demand. The weaning is thus accomplished by a series of gradual steps in which other interests and other foods assume an importance in the child's mind because both are associated with the status and prestige of a group of elder children with whom the child's lot is more involved. Any hesitations over taking the steps of the weaning process are overcome for the child by the well-directed and unmistakable ridicule of elders, both adult and children.

857 Again it may be noted that by the time the weaning stage is passed and the child is ready 861 to join the children's play groups there has been little physical frustration and a lack of any discipline that could be called severe. The child has been a center of interest during infancy. Now it has been gently eased out of infancy and into the status of a relatively self-dependent [154] childhood. Thumb sucking, incidentally, as distinguished from object sucking, is unknown among Pukapukan infants or children. This gradual process of growing up is continued during the early years of childhood (from the age, say, of two to seven or eight). Young children form mixed-sex gangs. They are relatively free from adult demands or adult interference of any sort. These gangs, consisting of perhaps six or more children drawn from neighboring households, roam about bush, reef, or beach by day or night. Their plays are either imitative games mimicking adult activities—fishing games, domestic games, "family games" (realistically acting the roles of husband and wife)—or else the free-energy activities apparently characteristic of children everywhere—laughing, dancing, racing, singing, and swimming. Hungry, the children drift back to the village for food; tired, they throw themselves down in the house for a sleep of one hour or eight. The gangs have a relatively stable existence. They appear to be based mainly on age level. Children of the upper age gradually drift out to join groups of still older children. Their places are taken by the "weaners" who drift into the group from below. Adults are generally tolerant of these children's gangs. As long as they keep to themselves, amuse themselves with their own activities, and in general are rarely

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861 seen or heard, then the children have the utmost freedom to explore at leisure their brave new world of physical events and human relationships.

868 By the time the child has reached the age of about ten years the gangs have become single-sexed and the responsibilities and duties of fitting into an adult world begin to limit their 857 earlier freedom. Boys and girls go around in their own gang groups whenever they have time or the opportunity. But now much of their activity is devoted to learning adult tasks through more constant association with adults. While the boy associates with his older male relatives and absorbs a knowledge of fish and fishing, of such male craft activities as the making of hooks, houses, canoes, nets, and fishlines, the girl stays closer at home with her adult female relatives and in turn learns the preparation of foods and the plaiting of baskets, food containers, mats, and clothing. Attitudes both central and incidental to the Pukapukan psy- 867 chology of the sexes also tend to sink deeper and stabilize themselves at this period, both boy and girl learning, by largely unconscious repetition, the specific attitudes of their own sex and absorbing from example, talk, and gossip expectancy attitudes in regard to the behavior, feeling, and thinking of the opposite sex. These attitudes receive a fairly explicit exemplification in the old chants that both sexes learn by heart for recital at recurring festival occasions. After puberty the young take every opportunity (opportunities are generally many and easily come by) to school themselves in the sex patterns of their culture by processes of experiment that end with the more stable relationships of marriage.

861 It is in the pre-puberty period in particular, however, that there is a hardening of discipline and control which seems to come as a shock to many children. For children of this age, 858 girls as well as boys, physical beatings are common. Children are whipped with apparent severity—though the onlooker must sometimes be deceived into assuming that loud shouting and wailing accurately indicate intense pain—for various types of activity which either parent or other relative of equivalent status in the household interprets generally as disobedience to commands or laziness or lack of expected skill. These beatings are given mostly by the older women of the household. Their long range effect and the discipline they subserve are probably of a dual nature. The control, that is, tends to jolt the child out of an earlier freedom attitude; it also hastens the fuller participation of the young person in adult economic activities, thus increasing the productive economy of both the household group and the close-knit village community. With the acquisition of adult status, marked formerly by ob- 884 serving simple group ceremonies and the formal donning of waist girdle or woman's kilt, the young person is considered a full-fledged adult member of the community: eligible to marry, to receive adult food shares in village food divisions, to perform all the economic duties associated with the age grading of young adults. The gradual process of learning the ins and outs of Pukapukan culture is now, in theory at least, well on to becoming a finished task.

III

861 So far the pattern, as it has been stated, has run itself along with an easy but, of course, deceptive simplicity. Mention of stresses and strains incidental to the process of becoming

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861 socialized have been confined to generalized statements about weaning and pre-puberty. These two periods are undoubtedly two formalized crisis periods in the life of the Pukapukan child. But there are others as well that are common but which probably have a differing impact, depending somewhat on obscure factors in the life of this particular Pukapukan child or that. Study of all the behavior records collected by direct observation of Pukapukan children in a wide variety of situations suggests that the most frequent of these stresses in the socialization process order themselves into the following rough and non-exhaustive classes: behavior difficulties over weaning; behavior stresses through discipline; behavior problems in adoption; fear situations of various kinds, such as fear of objects, fear of ridicule; aggressive behavior in the effort to control objects; aggressiveness towards siblings. It will be worth while to characterize these difficulties in some detail in order to illustrate both the situations that give rise to frustration and the behavior that is typical of the Pukapukan child in these circumstances.[1]

159 Two observations will serve as examples of weaning stresses. These and other observations throughout this section are given in the form of field note records.

862 Mata, a childless married woman is minding her sister's baby, William (0:8),[2] for the day while
152 his mother works in the taro gardens. The child is soon to be weaned and has already started to eat taro and nuts; Mata's keeping the child for a whole day is part of the weaning process. The child gets restless and fretful, so Mata picks it up in her arms and rocks it violently, cuddling it fiercely, bumping it about and patting it with no gentle hand. To soothe the child further she gives it her dry breast to suck. The baby sucks hard and then when he can get no milk, he stands up, suddenly bites Mata's neck. Then he returns to her breast and ends by giving her nipple a severe nip with his teeth. Mata slaps the child on the head. The child cries hard, throws itself about in her lap. It is given some coconut flesh to eat but continues to whimper for some time thereafter.

Liaki (1:3) is the youngest of six children living with their unmarried mother. He walks but is not yet completely weaned. His mother is just recovering from a chill and fever. She tries not to let Liaki have the breast because she fears her fever may have made her milk bad for the child. She puts Liaki to sleep on the section of the sleeping platform occupied by his sisters. He repeatedly gets up in the night, however, crawls over to his mother, cries loudly and tries to get at her breast. He is crying this afternoon. His mother tells me she has again tried to put him to sleep without breast

124 [1] The material on children given here is summarized from specific observations made throughout our Pukapukan fieldwork on thirty-one children in Yato village, the village in which we lived. This is more than half the children in the village between the ages of six months and twelve years. The children studied grouped themselves in age grades as follows: under 1 year, 4; 1–2 years, 4; 2–3 years, 4; 3–4 years, 5; 4–5 years, 4; 5–6, 6–7, 7–8, 8–9, 10–12, 2 children each. Twenty-two of the children were male, nine were female. There is no reason to think that this group as a whole (and its age distribution) does not represent a fair sample of Pukapukan children—except for the fact that an ideal sample would demand approximately equal sex representation. Specific general taking of these thirty-one children was, of course, supplemented by more casual observation of many children in our own as well as in the two other villages on the atoll, together with long discussions with informants over childhood problems. One of us, it should also be noted, could use the Pukapukan dialect with sufficient confidence to make the native language the means of communication with both children and adults.

[2] Figures in parentheses after names indicate the child's age. A figure before the colon indicates years; one following the colon, months.

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159 feeding. Each time she puts him down, he sits up, cries and crawls onto her lap. Kneeling in her lap
862 he tries to grasp her breast. She pushes his hand away. He rolls onto his belly on the ground, kicks
his toes into the sand for a few minutes and then falls asleep. Whenever he is seen these days he is
152 playing continually with his penis. Sometime later, when he wakes, his mother puts him outside
the cookhouse. The railings of this are too high for him to climb over. He finally succeeds in entering
the house by bending back the screen-mat tied to the railings, poking his head through a gap in the
railing and tumbling into the house headfirst. His mother says he always enters the house in this
way, "just like a baby getting born." She says weaning time is hard for the child. He cries all the
time because he cannot get what he wants.

861 Discipline of children is secured in two ways: either by physical punishment or else by
threats designed to arouse fear in the child. Discipline-frustrations are of the following or-
der:

[863] For bodily hygiene: as soon as a child is old enough to walk, an older person, either par-
ent or sibling, leads it to a proper place outside the house. A child old enough to be about by
itself is expected to leave the house to attend to its bodily needs. Should it fail to do this,
parents scold, threaten to whip and often do whip the child across the buttocks.

Physical punishment: A mother sends her son (12:0) to feed the family pigs. The boy
goes off in the right direction but stops to play a game of marbles. His mother keeps her eye
on him, continually calling out to him to get along to the pigs. After about half an hour,
with the boy still playing marbles, the mother asks a man going in that direction to bring the
boy back to her. The man carries the boy back on his shoulders. The mother puts down the
infant she is nursing and whips the boy severely with a coconut leaf switch. A group of her
friends sit around unconcerned. The boy finally runs from her into the house where he picks
up an empty coconut and hurls it at his mother. It goes wide. His mother pays no more at
tention to him. Crying, the boy rolls on the ground for a while, then goes off to feed the
pigs.

869 Threats: Parents threaten toddlers by telling them that animals, e.g., pigs or ducks, will
get them if they disobey commands, or else that ghosts will eat them. Ghost threats are
common at nightfall. (Fear of supernaturals is very strongly grounded in Pukapukan psychol
ogy.) Spitting or pretense of spitting at misbehaving children is also a common method of
discipline.

673 In connection with all types of discipline the eldest boy in the family has special privi
865 leges and powers over his younger siblings. He may whip his younger brothers or sisters if
they disobey any of his commands.

152 Aggressive behavior towards younger or older siblings of the same or opposite sex ap
pears to be common in Pukapuka. According to one excellent informant most children were
unhappy if there were no younger brothers and sisters in the family. When her eldest son
was about eight years old, he asked his mother to give birth to a sister for him. His mother
said she would and when she later told the boy she was pregnant, he was very happy and
assured her many times that she was going to bear a female child. According to his mother
this boy never showed any jealousy towards his younger siblings while they were still in-

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fants but when they reached the age of two or more years and began to run about he would become angry with them and very aggressive in their presence. Two examples will again show the form in which this aggression expresses itself among children.

Pita (10:0) has a drinking nut which his two younger siblings, Talatini (8:0) and Langatila (3:6), wish to share with him. Langatila grizzles and cries at his brother while Talatini struggles with Pita to secure possession of the nut. Pita fights him off with one hand at the same time swallowing the coconut water as quickly as possible. Then when the nut is nearly empty he throws it on the ground and walks off. Talatini picks it up and goes to crack it open. Langatila cries harder than ever. Pita comes back, picks up a coconut switch and beats Langatila with it. Pita says he does this "without reason, just for fun." He goes inside the house and finds Langatila there. He whips him again, continuing the whipping as crying Langatila first climbs a house post unsuccessfully trying to escape the punishment, then slips down the post and falls on the ground. He finds a coconut spathe there and tries to hit Pita with it. While this is going on, the father of the two boys comes into the house. Langatila without a word to, or a glance in the direction of, his father slips out of the house and walks away to the beach, muffling his sobbing as he goes. The mother of the boys has been in the cookhouse next door throughout this scene, within easy hearing range, but she has not bothered to interfere with this aggressive behavior.

The second example shows this sibling aggression in another context. The children of Puloru are sitting on the beach eating their food. Ngatokalua (5:0) is crying. His elder sister Nunui (12:0) volunteers that she has just whipped him. After a while Ngatokalua stops his weeping, turns to Nunui and calls such insults at her as "stinking vagina." Nunui slaps his face. He repeats the insult and this time Nunui hits him hard across the mouth with her hand. He begins to cry once more. Nunui meantime has been minding her still younger brother (1:3) who is fretful and troublesome. She makes a slip knot in a coconut leaflet, slips the noose over Liaki's penis and pulls the leaflet so hard that Liaki falls to the ground. Nunui then tries to rock Liaki to sleep by cradling him in her arms and manipulating his penis. When she thinks Liaki is asleep, she carries him towards the house but Liaki wakes and cries out. Nunui runs back to the beach carrying the crying Liaki suspended by an arm and leg. She runs down to the sea, playfully dips Liaki's head under the water, then sits down on the sand and begins her rocking of Liaki all over again. Tinomana (2:6), another brother, comes up. He sees his younger brother being rocked to sleep. He picks up a long coconut midrib from the beach and makes as if to hit Liaki with it. He ends by pounding the midrib against a log of drift wood, then holds it up in the air, shouting out that it is his spear.

Frustrations arising from a conflict of loyalties consequent upon adoption would seem to present major difficulties in the lives of many Pukapukan children. There are two types of adoption in the culture: complete adoption and partial or feeding adoption. Complete adoption involves change of residence and change of patrilineal descent. Feeding adoption usually involves change in residence but never change in descent line. To show the incidence of Pukapukan adoption it may be noted that of 348 persons included in a household census, 80 (22.9%) have at some time been completely adopted. Of 209 persons of a generation below that of mother and father in the households, 43 (20.5%) are completely adopted, 13 (6.22%) are partially adopted. Adoption of both types, therefore, has involved over 25% of the individuals in one generation-stratum. The motives for adoption are both personal and eco-

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597 nomic. The personal motive is the desire of a childless man to ensure the continuation of his patrilineal descent line; economic incentives include the desire of a childless couple for the food shares and property that an adopted child brings into the household, or for someone to care for them in their old age. The range of possible relationships between adopting parent and child is almost infinite. Study of census material, however, shows that adoptions by maternal and paternal relatives are almost equal; the father's sister, mother's brother, and mother's father are likely to adopt more frequently than any other relatives.

597 The process of complete adoption generally begins with the bespeaking of a child before its birth. The adopting couple feed the mother from the third month of pregnancy onwards. [431] They present her family with special food gifts each time there is a food division. They 553 name the child and provide the birth feast, taking formal possession of the child at weaning. This method of pre-natal adoption is looked upon as the best method of ensuring complete 851 social and emotional control of the child. A divided loyalty in the child is looked upon as fatal to the complete success of the economic and psychological security desired by the parents. On the other hand it is recognized that adoption at a later age gives the parents a chance to evaluate the capabilities of the adopted child. Hence some parents favor a partial or feeding adoption at the beginning: the adopting parents take the child at weaning time into their household; if at a later date they wish completely to adopt the child, they do so by mutual arrangement with the blood parents, accompanied by a renaming of the child.

597 All our Pukapukan informants sensed the conflict situations involved in this extensive 828 practise of adoption. The adopted child is considered to be the child of the adopting parents 577 in everything except the accident of conception and gestation, though the fiction is that the adopting parents become sociological parents before birth through their pre-natal feeding of the mother. The adoption is held to break all kinship ties based on blood and new kinship obligations are established according to the relationships of the adopting parents. As the child grows up, however, he soon learns to know his blood parents. He may be permitted to visit them, to work with them, to care for them in sickness, but it is to his adopting parents that the child owes primary social and affectual obligations and on whom he is supposed to lavish all his interest and support. Because of the complete sociological break that adoption is supposed to occasion, the conflict situation which blood parents, either through motives of natural affection or economic advantage, may stimulate by encouraging their child to visit them, by petting him, lavishing affection over him, saving choice food for him, is regarded with dismay and hostility. Blood parents who in any way try to revive blood ties are regarded as black traitors. If a child shows more than a formal interest in his blood parents, the latter are expected to show in every possible way, even by resorting to violent whippings, that the child is unwanted. Similarly, adopting parents are justified in severely disciplining an adopted child who persists in sneaking off to a blood parent's household. The following examples will illustrate these points:

597 Lima (7:0), the adopted child of Mata and Leleau, comes back to Mata's house from working 159 in the bush with Leleau, eats some food, throws off his lavalava and then starts to walk down the 152

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599 village path in the direction of the next village where his blood parents live. Mata screams after the
159 boy to return immediately; then noticing he is not paying any attention to her, she runs after him.
She comes back driving the crying boy in front of her with heavy blows from a thick stick. Lima
152 runs into the house and Mata barricades him inside, telling him not to try to move from the house
on pain of another beating. In explanation of this scene, Mata complains that Lima slips away from
her house as much as possible, visiting his blood parents by preference. She is enraged with the boy
[839] and takes a long time to calm down again. Lima, incidentally, is forever pulling at his penis and mas-
turbating. Mata is almost the only Pukapukan parent who is worried by this. She does not allow
Lima to go naked as do the other boys of his age but keeps him dressed in the lavalava skirt. It is
perhaps significant that Lima tossed aside his lavalava before trying to steal away from his adopted
mother's house.

597 The second example of frustration is more indirect in that it refers to the reaction of a
154 child to other children in the household who have been adopted, but it provides a case of play
857 behavior that is clearly symbolic and probably only to be intrepreted in terms of a deep-
159 seated conflict over being a member of a household in which the adopted children enjoy a
favored position.

Ta (7:0) is the youngest of eight children. He lives with his now elderly parents who have adopted their two grandchildren. (Ta's niece and nephew) into the same household. The parents give all their favors and affection to their adopted grandchildren. Ta is obviously unwanted in the household. He is an unsmiling, lonely child, hanging precariously onto the fringes of a gang that has no particular welcome for him. On this occasion he was seen playing marbles with two other boys and a girl, the oldest of whom was four and a half years.

Ta drops out of the game. He strolls off into the bush but is soon back again with a long narrow immature coconut. He cuts a nick out of the center bottom of this nut with his knife and says, "This is the penis of my child." Then he turns the nut over and makes another nick saying, "This is the hole of the anus for defecating." Now he scratches a few rough marks on the nut to represent eyes, nose, and mouth, and lays the nut down on the ground. He says his child has lived for one day only and is now dead. He says he is going to bury the child. (But for adoption, Ta's nephews, whom he now calls "brother" would be called "son" or "child" by him.) He begins to dig out a hole in the ground with a coconut shell. The other two boys now drop their marble game and join in the burial play. When he has finished digging, Ta goes off to find some "mats" for his corpse-child. He brings back some large dried leaves which he carefully wraps round the child. The three boys now place the corpse on strips of coconut leaf and lift it up to place in the grave. As they do so, they fumble. The corpse drops off the leaves onto the ground. Without comment, all three boys kick the corpse and hole to pieces, trampling on both with their feet.

While his two friends begin other games, Ta picks up a small piece of coconut wood and starts to cut out what he calls a coffin. He whittles away for almost an hour, carefully shaping the box and hollowing out the inside. From another portion of the same piece of wood Ta shapes what he says is his "child"—a longish piece of wood with a knob representing the head. He inserts the child in the coffin. Finally, he makes a lid and with it carefully covers over the child inside the coffin. When he has finished he stares at his work for a while. Then he removes the child and proceeds to cut coffin and lid into small sections. These sections he throws away into the bush. Now he cuts up his child-corpse, handing round pieces to several boys who have come up to play saying, "Eat my

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597 154 child here!" His own share of the child's body he places in his mouth and chews vigorously. He spits out the macerated wood, stamps on it, and goes away.

857 159 Burying games played by children are not uncommon. They generally follow immediately upon a death in the community when the children's interest is turned to corpses by fringe-participation in the funeral wake and burial. Ta's play, however, bore no relation to any actual death. It appears to have been quite spontaneous, unmotivated by immediate imitation. It is nonetheless significant, however, for the insight it gives into the adoption-frustration situation in Pukapukan society; specially significant if Freud's conceptualizations be used for approximate explanation.

IV

864 Enough has perhaps been said to suggest some of the overt conflict situations that the Pukapukan child has to surmount in the slow process of socialization. It may be of interest now to discuss briefly the attitudes of children to the facts of sex and also the attitudes of parents and elders in regard to the sex knowledge and sex plays of children. The discussion will show clearly that conflicts over sex are certainly not conflicts that in any way appear to ruffle the surface of Pukapukan child development. The metaphor may well be emphasized in so far as it still leaves as an open question the nature and extent of unconscious conflict and repression.

864 831 513 Two points may well be kept in mind in considering the sexual attitudes of Pukapukan children. First, the general attitude of the culture towards sexual activities is that these are pleasurable play activities. The attitude is realistic, sensuous but not sensual. For the Pukapukan all activities lead naturally to some form or other of sex expression. Secondly, all members of the household sleep in the same sleeping house. Where there is only one mosquito net in the house, parents and children all sleep under it. In a few houses in which a rough partition separates two rooms, parents and small children sleep in one room, older

864 834 children in the other. A group of older women informants said that some parents make an effort not to let their children witness them in coitus but other parents make no effort to conceal their actions. Particular parents wait until they assume their children are asleep or else go to the bush to have intercourse. These precautions, however, prevent little. It is certain that children witness the sex act at one time or another, usually at a very early age, and are fully conversant with all that relates to sex and childbirth.

864 521 844 831 Many conversations with children between the ages of three and six years record detailed but volunteered accounts of childbirth. The children assume that childbirth is as neutral a topic of discussion as any other; just as their parents have no objection to their being present at childbirth—no objection that is, so long as they do not insist on pursuing a kitten between the legs of a parturient woman or hindering the midwife by tangling her up with a pig that is being chased. Similarly in regard to the sex act: the familiarity of children with this phase of behavior as recorded in their conversations or activities is striking in its completeness. Words referring to the sex act are continually on their tongues either by

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864 way of comment, gossip, or insult, just as they are continually on the tongues of adults,
521 whether children are present or not. Typical field records are the following:

831 As a gang of children (ages 3 to 8) are sitting on the beach towards evening watching the fishing
159 canoes come back from their day outside the reef, a single-seater canoe goes past. When asked who
857 is in the canoe the children reply, "It is Elia." Lima (5:9) goes on to add: "It is Elia who copulated with Tala." He then improvises a song to the words, "It is Elia who copulated with Tala. They walked. They copulated. They played about." As Lima sings his song, the other children join in. All are sitting on the ground and as they sing, they accompany the rhythm of the song with movements of their bodies.

Olani (3:6), a girl, is sitting on the railing of the cookhouse. Her mother is inside the cookhouse nursing a baby and nearby is an older brother. Olani sings a song which all seem to enjoy. She has taken the tune from one of the hymns she hears in church and has adapted it to the following words: "They went through the bush. I guess they copulated!" This song she repeats over and over again. Her mother explains that the children playing in the bush often see couples going to, or coming back from, the back beach of the island (favourite place of assignation in Pukapuka). The children note the names of the couples and come back to the village singing improvised songs about the incident. Olani's song was looked upon by the mother as a very ordinary type of expression for her daughter.

839 Masturbation is extremely common among children of both sexes to the age of about 12
857 years. Equally common is manipulation of the sex organs, either in situations which seem to cause shyness in a child or else as a game among children. There is probably no particular
864 point in documenting such behavior in detail. Field records include for example the following situations: three boys, the youngest 3 years, the others 6 and 7 years respectively, manipulating each other's penises when they are supposed to be observing Sabbath rest; a group of six boys between the ages of four and six years manipulating their penises and then trying to demonstrate to each other whether they can micturate with erect penises; a girl aged 12 years minding her brother (1:3) and amusing herself by making a slip knot in a coconut leaflet, slipping the noose over the boy's penis and then dragging on it hard enough to pull the boy to the ground; family plays in which a child pairs off with another of the opposite sex, the two playing at being husband and wife by manipulating each other's sex organs and imitating the sex act.

The general attitude of adults to masturbation in children and sex organ manipulation is one of good-humored toleration; that is, it is considered amusing if called to their attention. But for the most part adults never feel called upon to notice. Two exceptions only were noted to this generalization: one has been already mentioned for the boy Lima; the other exception occurred when a mother drew attention to her masturbating son in order to amuse an audience (not, however, to shame the boy). All adults know that masturbation goes on among children. It is regarded as their game, natural to children of certain ages, and that is
839 all there is to it. There is only one reference in the folk tales to adult masturbation. This concerns the fate of certain Pukapukan husbands whose wives all left them, attracted by a gang of exceedingly handsome young men. The tale relates in great detail the practises of the de-

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839 serted husbands they summoned up enough courage to attack and kill the young men. No Pukapukan can tell this tale without commiserating with those husbands of long ago.

864 The material just summarized suggests clearly the Pukapukan practises of, and attitudes
858 to, sex among children. They may be summarized for boys as a good deal of play with the sexual organs, including masturbation and manipulation of the sex organs of other children, usually but not exclusively of the same sex. For the girls much the same holds. These generalizations hold for children up to the age of eleven or twelve. Towards the end of this age period boys and girls are both caught up into an increasing participation in adult activities: fishing, coconut collecting, food preparation, and mat making. The character of plays, at this age, does not differ from the typical wrestling plays, organized games, and imitative plays of
154 children of younger age levels. It has seemed impossible to characterize on the basis of field
883 records any flight to reality or any repression of parentally directed hostility theoretically expectable from the concept of the latency period. There are likewise no records to be
561 added concerning Pukapukan adolescence. Casual observation suggests no adolescent conflicts, no cultural storm and stress period. Nor does knowledge of the culture suggest any psychological reason or basis for possible adolescent conflicts. There is a total absence of motifs, incidents, or allusions to adolescence in the chants and folktales. The only coming of age with which the Pukapukan seems to be familiar is the assumption of sociological adulthood when the old judge the young to be ready to take on the economic and social responsibilities of adult life.[6]

V

121 Enough field data have been given, we hope, to outline the main patterns of childhood socialization in Pukapuka and some of the stresses incidental to this process of growing up. Certain theoretical points emerge from this material. They relate on the one hand to field methods and on the other hand to interpretations of the field data.

On the completion of our field work we summarized for Sapir our experience and conclusions in regard to field methods.[7] There is no need to retraverse these in detail. They related principally to an analysis of the kind of culture in which we thought children could be

178 [6] There are naturally occasional deviants who do not fit easily into this pattern. In *Brief Pukapukan Case*
605 *History* (Journal, Polynesian Society, Vol. 48, pp. 135–43, 1939) we have outlined one adolescent's growing up that illustrates interesting variations on the pattern as here stated. It should also be noted that in Pukapukan
582 culture, before conversion to Christianity broke down some of the old personal tapus, one situation alone was likely to have caused personal stress at this period. This was the strict tapu that formerly held between a man and his cousins-in-avoidance (females only). The tapu was not observed in childhood. Its incidence was first felt during adolescence. The functioning of this tapu and the stresses it brought about have been noted in the *Ethnology of Pukapuka* (pp. 259–63). This tapu is preserved today among old people. The young bother about it little. Among the younger generations several marriages have even occurred among kin who were formerly rigidly tapu to each other—an utterly inconceivable situation according to old-time patterns, and one today that causes [illegible] disapproval among the old.

[7] Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, *Some Methodological Implications in the Study of Primitive Children* (Ms., [illegible]

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121 most fruitfully studied, the kinds of situations, observations of which would lead to the most valuable data, the type of training most desirable for those studying primitive children, an evaluation of case-study possibilities in primitive cultures, and a final emphasis on the importance of long-continued study of selected children over a period of years.[8] This last conclusion we take to be fundamental. One assumption of our *Notes and Queries* was that by studying children of different age levels problems incidental to a time series might at least be overcome. But the time series itself appears to be of spectacular importance if we wish thoroughly to understand personality development and socialization processes. By observation of children for a few weeks at a time, even by repeating such observation periods at regular or irregular intervals, it is possible to compile a formidable set of data relative to sex life, play, relations to other children and adults, and so on. But the question of interpretation still remains. How are these data to be interpreted as bearing upon the production of certain personality types or upon the theory and practise of child development? Only, we assume, by studying selected children over measurable time periods. In terms of theory, analytic or otherwise, it may be possible to infer that certain strains, inhibitions, repressions should result from the conditioning processes that a culture approves. The next step in method must always be to see if such strains and blockages do occur. And unless the same individual is studied over a long period of time, how can one be sure what happens and what the processes at work really consist in? We believe "retroactive" case histories that work backwards from the present are of great value. But of greater value still would be forward-working case histories that took the infant from birth, several particular infants in fact, and studied them with a day to day care, as they interacted with their personal and cultural environment. This would be a difficult task even for the most heroically conscientious and psychologically sophisticated anthropologist. But until it is done we will always be guessing at the key which solves the problem—guessing with some probability doubtless but never being sure the key has been found. The first five years of life are generally considered of importance in our own society for establishing the main personality reactive patterns in the child. A five year case history of a primitive child, starting from the first hour of life or before, would give the key that would open many of the doors that at present lock away the inner processes of personality socialization.

114 Turning now more specifically to the interpertation of field data, one point among many
128 may be emphasized. A survey of recent psychoanalytic and anthropological literature suggests some conflict of opinion over the relative importance of cultural factors in stabilizing personality patterns. Admittedly everything turns upon the question of what is psychologically given. If the hypothetical raw stuff of human nature is essentially plastic, easily to be molded this way or that, then culturalization must play an overwhelming part in personality development. Even should the individual be born with a basic personality type,

[8] See Ernest Beaglehole, *Polynesian Anthropology Today* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 39, pp. 213–21, 1937), p. 220. Kluckhohn has also commented on this point among others in his paper: *Theoretical Basis for an Empirical Method of Studying the Acquisition of Culture by Individuals* (Man, Vol. 39, No. 89, July 1939).

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114 128 nevertheless as long as this type is not polar, much importance must be attached to cultural factors in defining the success with which the basic psychological personality adjusts itself to the status personality.[9] If on the other hand, as psychoanalytic theory appears to hold, the psychological nature of man is everywhere the same—that is if the infant in Siberia or in Africa or Polynesia is heir to emotional and sexual drives (libido) that must find outlet on object or self according to predetermined developmental stages—then it would seem that cultural factors can do little but accentuate here or play down there. The psychoanalytic contention that the nuclear complex is of universal occurrence is perhaps a case in point.[10] Psychoanalytic theory in this matter is still in a formative stage and doubtless it may be possible to adduce evidence in conflict with the preceding statement. Roheim, for instance, in his analysis of Australian materials, concludes that the Australian aborigine is predominantly of the oral character type,[11] a personality development that can be due to conditioning and to this only.

On the other hand Dr Susan Isaacs[12] inclines rather strongly to the opinion that cultural factors are of slighter importance than libidinal drives. She would expect to find in Pukapuka, personality types similar to those found in our own society. It would seem in support of this view, as careful study of all our records indicate, that Pukapukan children engage in behavior activities in frames of reference that are analogous to, or even identical with common behavior activities of American children. There are alternations of love and hate, object sucking, nipple biting, plays with sand and water, "cosy places" plays, genital manipulation, "family plays"—to name but a few. In this sense, and generalizing broadly, the major difference in the socialization process between Pukapukan and American children lies in the

[9] See for instance Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York, 1936), especially Chapters 8 and 26, and Plant, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–20.

[10] Compare Ernest Jones, *Mother Right and the Sexual Ignorance of Savages* (International Journal of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 6, pp. 109–30, 1925) with Malinowski's analysis in *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (London and New York, 1927), *op. pp.* 135 ff. Benedict, also, believes that an Œdipus complex *is* quite impossible among the Zuñi. See her *Patterns of Culture* (New York, 1934), p. 101.

It may be noted that since our article was completed (November, 1939) M. F. Ashley Montagu has summarized the relevant cultural material bearing on the Œdipus complex in his paper *Niuean*, *Science and Psychoanalysis* (Psychiatry, Vol. 4, pp. 45–60, 1941, see pp. 48–49). Reference may also be made to Margaret Mead's recent survey of comparative work on character structure: Cultural Change *and Social Sanctions* (Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 14, pp. 92–109, 1940). The relative importance of biological drives as compared with cultural factors in determining character structure and personality development has also become a matter of active recent discussion. See in this connection Harry Stack Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (Psychiatry, Vol. 3, pp. 1–117, 1940), Ernest Beaglehole, *Interpersonal Theory and Social Psychology* (Psychiatry, Vol. 4, pp. 61–73, 1941), A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York, 1939), and finally, the more orthodox point of view and the references given in Ernest Lewy's article, *The Return of the Repression* (Bulletin, Menninger Clinic, Vol. 5, pp. 47–55, 1941).

[11] G. Roheim, *The Study of Character Development and the Ontogenetic Theory of Culture* (in Essays Presented to *G. C. Seligman*, London, 1934, pp. 282–92). Horney gives a good summary of the present position in her *Neurotic Personality of our Time* (New York, 1937), pp. 16–20.

[12] From personal communication.

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114 128 fact that the Pukapukan attitude to overt sex expression among children is the very reverse of our own. This means that Pukapukan children say and do things that American children only phantasy about. The fundamental libidinal drives are the same. The difference is that what the children of one culture do, the children of the other culture dream. Our own feeling is that the implications of this difference for the culturalization-personality process are still unclear.

A similar suspension of judgment would also seem to be in order over the psychology of the so-called latency period. In our own society psychoanalysts conclude that repressive cultural attitudes towards sexual expression have the effect of so controlling libidinal development that the years of middle childhood, say from seven to twelve, are characterized by an absence of overt sexual behavior. Freud himself apparently inclined to the view that whether or not a latency period is found in a particular culture depends upon attitudes in that society to sexual expression or repression.[13] The data summarized here on Pukapukan children would appear to support this view. Again however Dr Isaacs, on the basis of her very extensive work with children, conceptualizes the latency period in somewhat different terms. According to her,[14] it is best understood as referring to the child's repression of its central unconscious conflicts with regard to his parents, the consequent lessening of emotional tension and stabilization of attitudes towards adults and other children. In terms of this definition it is plain, as Dr Isaacs herself suggests, that the latency period is just as characteristic of Pukapukan children as of those of American culture.

152 157 128 One further note may perhaps be added in regard to interpretations. The adult Pukapukan character, as judged by cultural ideals, seems to be one marked by much aggressiveness. Evidence for this is found in intense village rivalries over sport (but not in economic matters), in innumerable personal chants that glorify individual prowess in love and other pursuits, in an at times turbulent island history marked by bloodshed and violence.[15] This aggressiveness might be directly due, on a theoretical analysis, either to specific patterns of childhood conditioning or else it might conceivably represent an over-compensation for fundamental insecurities and inadequacies brought about by the conditioning of other patterns. One's inability decisively to infer the types of adult character formation likely to result from childhood patterns even in our own society is presumably due to the fact that we are working with a social psychology that is as yet not as powerful as it may sometime become. One's difficulty is increased immeasureably when any sort of definitive analysis is attempted for a primitive society.[16] We confess a present inability to show the linkages within

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[13] See for example Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study* (London, 1935), p. 66 fn.

[14] Susan S. Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children* (London, 1933), pp. 319, 397-99, appendix 2, pp. 458-61.

[15] The role of this aggressiveness in Pukapukan culture and the mechanisms whereby it receives institutionalized outlet have been briefly characterized: Ernest Beaglehole, *Emotional Release in a Polynesian Community* (Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 32, pp. 329-28, 1937).

[16] G. Gorer has recently attempted this type of analysis in his *Himalayan Village* (London, 1938). Cf. Margaret Mead's review-article on this book in Oceania, Vol. 9, pp. 344-53, 1939.

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121 Pukapukan culture that join childhood patterns to the patterns of behavior that set the norm for adult activities. In very general terms one can annotate four stages of Pukapukan child development: an infancy marked by maternal solicitude and consequent security; a weaning that sends the child a-packing in the company of his fellows; years of childhood that mean a large measure of independence and freedom from parental or adult control; a pre-adolescence that sees a reassertion of adult control and a tendency to force the child along the path to adult status. These seem to be the main stages in the process of growing up. Should they tend to produce an aggressive adult character? The answer to this question might well lie in a deeper analysis of the pre-adolescent period, where one senses the Pukapukan urge to push the child willy-nilly into adulthood. But perhaps the question is not one rightly asked. If it is, it surely brings us back once more to the necessity of forward-looking life histories. Only through these can we see the pattern actually at work molding the life of the individual. Only in terms of data so gained could one surely present the inner story of how the socialization process actually works. Only in this way could one tell the story of how the individual measures himself up to the ideal standards of a culture and works out his personality pattern in terms of his felt achievement.

Again therefore one returns to the question, what is the psychologically given and what the nature and importance of cultural conditioning? It is tribute to Sapir's insight into the ways of culture and of man to note the way in which he sensed that the study of primitive children would ultimately provide clear solutions to many difficult problems. The answers are not yet at hand. The problems are only beginning sufficiently to clarify themselves in such a way as to present workable hypotheses as leads for investigation. Sapir's theory of culture led him inexorably to certain inferences regarding the processes of culture acquisition. It is now the privilege of the psychologist-anthropologist by using this lead to enrich his own field work and thus his understanding of what culture means to man.

Victoria College
Wellington, New Zealand